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LETTER DATED 27 AUGUST 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 25 August 1993 from by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the 97th meeting of the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 25 August 1993 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I refer to my letter of 5 July 1993 concerning the decisions adopted in the name of the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) at its 95th meeting, and I should like once again to draw your attention to decisions adopted in the name of the Committee, on this occasion at its 97th meeting. It is clear from the nature of the decisions in question that the representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom and France are continuing, by prior intent, to impose on the Committee the adoption of decisions aimed at strengthening the unjust embargo imposed on the Iraqi people, particularly as it affects essential civilian and humanitarian areas, with a view to achieving political objectives that bear no relation to the resolutions of the Security Council or the Charter of the United Nations.

Some examples of the requests rejected by these three representatives at the meeting in question are set forth hereunder for purposes of illustration.

1. The representative of the United States objected to a request for the export to Iraq of 4,000 bags of shellac for painting school desks and blackboards. When the representative of Morocco drew the Committee's attention to the fact that the item was important for schools and was a finished product, the United States representative maintained his objection on the grounds that no essential humanitarian need was involved. The objection to this request requires no comment. It is inconceivable that the letter and spirit of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, or even the resolutions of the Security Council, should prohibit the importation by Iraq of civilian items that make a direct contribution to the essential process of educating hundreds of thousands of children and young persons in Iraqi schools and other educational institutions.

2. The representative of the United Kingdom objected to the export to Iraq of 130 tons of printing inks for the Ministry of Education on the grounds that the items were non-essential. The representative of Brazil commented that the inks would go to the Ministry of Education; the representative of New Zealand stated that the request should be approved since the Committee had approved similar requests in the past; and the representative of Morocco stated that inks were an essential product. The United States representative nevertheless called for precedents not to be invoked. Inks are a finished product used for those books and other publications that are fundamental to ensuring the right to education and the acquisition of knowledge and culture that is guaranteed under the prescriptions of religious law and by the covenants on human rights. That is a basic right of the people of Iraq, which brought writing to mankind and whose culture and civilization go back more than 6,000 years.

3. The United States representative objected to two requests for the export of 100,000 metres of textile piece goods and 50,000 kilograms of raw white yarn on the grounds that they were inputs to the textile industry. These items are humanitarian, civilian items used only for the purpose for which they are imported. The objection of the United States representative demonstrates the tendency to reject or block any request relating to civilian needs of a

humanitarian character so that the cumulative effect of such objections will be to inflict ever greater harm and damage on the Iraqi economy.

4. The representatives of the United Kingdom and France objected to a request for the export of 5,250 cartons of primer paint for vehicles on the grounds that they were for use on private cars; the representatives of France and Japan objected to the export of 58,000 tyres; and the representative of France objected to the export of 3,750 cartons of polyester putty with drier on the grounds given before. The representatives of these countries have persistently objected to all requests for the export of vehicle replacement parts on the grounds that they are intended for private cars. Such a pretext has no legal basis or logical justification that has any connection with the resolutions of the Security Council relating to Iraq. Large segments of the Iraqi people depend on private vehicles for the transport of passengers and goods within and between Iraqi cities, particularly in the difficult circumstances created by the shortage of spare parts in the public transport sector because of the blanket embargo. Objections such as these can only be explained as having the aim of achieving the contrived and dubious political objective of increasing the burden of the embargo on all classes of the Iraqi people.

5. The representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom objected to the export of 70 tons of wood glue for use in furnishings for schools and hospitals, and the representative of Djibouti asked that the World Health Organization be consulted. The representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom also objected to the export of 64,000 kilograms of glue intended for the same purpose. Objections to the export of items used in the health sector only betray the plan of the United States and the United Kingdom to inflict harm on all classes of the Iraqi people.

I take this opportunity to point out that certain members of the Committee do not take account in their objections of the information provided in the report of Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, following his visit to Baghdad from 10 to 17 May 1991, which was transmitted by the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council by his letter of 30 May 1991.

The refusal at this meeting to allow the importation of items of an essential civilian and humanitarian character must demonstrate to you and to the international community the political objectives that characterize the positions taken in the Committee by the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom.

The preconcerted political objective that underlies these positions is the desperate attempt to influence the free and independent national will of Iraq and the Iraqi people, although the vacuous and anomalous character of those who pursue this vile political objective has been amply and cogently demonstrated over the three years for which the unjust embargo has been maintained. The Iraqi people strongly condemns the positions taken by the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, and it more than ever holds fast to its free national will. All these governments can do is to reconsider their hostile policies against Iraq and the Iraqi people and desist from using this Committee for their devious purposes.

We call upon the governments of those States members of the Committee that have no political objectives, and they are the majority, to take a firm stand against the conduct of the representatives of the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom and to bring an end to a series of decisions that are hostile to the Iraqi people and an affront to the international community and the United Nations.

I request circulation of this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq